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Well, thank you for that great introduction, it's wonderful to be back in Australia. I've been coming here - oh my gosh, about 25 years now and it's always wonderful to be back. I see a few of my countrymen here and it's good to see those uniforms as well. I should make one little correction to the introduction, because I live in mortal dread of three women, my wife and my two daughters, one of whom is a naval officer. So this is a joint presentation.

It's an honour to be here. I will say, I do feel a little bit funny address a bunch of combat veterans, particularly in army, about land warfare and I feel little like a professor of theoretical carpentry who has been called upon to deliver a narration to the Greater Australian Word Working Association, but I will try to do something - something useful.

A wonderful military historian friend of mine and also a co-author John Gooch once said to me something I thought very interesting. He said: we moderns think of the future as something we walk into with our backs towards the past. He said: The Greeks were different. Their view was that you were facing the past and you were walking backwards into the future.

And I think that's a much better way of thinking about it. And so for that reason, what I would like to do is really to begin with the past to include the centenary that we're observing and that we're going to be observing the next four years of the First World War. And that really leads me to the first main observation that I want to make about land - land power and land warfare, and that's how much stuff doesn't change.

If - can I see some hands, any graduates of US Army Ranger School here? Yes. So I'm sure you got that little card with Roger's Rules of Ranging on it, which is a - it's actually a distillation of - well, it's something - it's like about a 20 page manual on patrolling put together by Robert Rogers in up-state New York in the mid-1750s. And, although, not every tactical detail is the way you would want to conduct a patrol, a lot of the basics, you know, they really don't change. And there's a - it's not just heritage, there's a sense that you're doing the same sort of business.

Certainly the fundamentals of leadership: my mission, my people, myself. That has, you know, that has been part of the military creed for a long time. The idea of mission orientated tactics, you know, we could have learned debates about that. Certainly, something that's, at least, 150 years old. The social structure that armies have, if you think - I think if one lives in the uniform world, you sort of take for granted this idea that you're going to have officers, non-commissioned officers and enlisted personnel.

That's a social structure which actually doesn't really exist in most of civil society anymore. It might have felt a little bit more appropriate in the midst of the industrial age, but is just a given for how armies likes yours and mine operate.

The basic organisation - and you're getting here a kind of less formal version of a speech that I'm going to be giving in Sydney named after one of your great military authors, Colonel E.G. Keogh. One of the points I'm going to make is, the army that he first went to war in, in 1917; rifle battalion had four infantry companies. And up through, I guess, the 1990s or so, about - Australian infantry battalions still had four companies. I gather you've gone down to three, but the basic structure hasn't changed an awful lot.

The basic qualities that armies like ours look for in - particularly in infantry men - haven't changed since Field Marshal Wavell famously said that a good infantryman is a combination of the successful poacher, cat burglar and gunman. So those are the qualities he thought that you wanted in an infantry soldier.

Now, all those really emerge from, I think, the First World War, particularly the end of the First Word War. That - putting on my military history hat; although you do have things like various light infantry units in the 18th century and early 19th century. When we think of modern land combat, a lot of it is still basically an evolution from the forms that were visible in 1917/1918. Squad based or section, as you would say, based tactics.

You know, that really did not exist at the beginning of the 20th century. By the time you get to 1917/1918, the Germans, as usual, kind of, pioneered the way, but pretty much everyone else was following it and the idea that a section was actually a subunit that can manoeuvre on its own and do things that required some independent leadership was - was out there.

So in certain respects, I think you have to begin by saying there's a lot about land warfare that has not changed and is just, kind of, innate to the nature of the business. And I would say that's probably more the case than, with respect, to either air or naval warfare; let alone domains that never existed before, like, cyber warfare.

And I also think that's why armies tend to be a pretty conservative lot. I mean, that's partly because they have such an intimate familiarity with mud and what that does to equipment and what confusion is like, all those - those very basic elements which help explain why you can - if you're living in the eastern United States, you can go and staff rides to Antietam or Gettysburg or places like that with a military group of lieutenant colonels and they will still get an awful lot out of it, in terms of thinking about the basic craft of their profession.

Just even looking at the - we do a lot of staff rides at SAIS and I've done a lot with both my own students and also with the American military. You know, and all the basics of how little folds of terrain can have a decisive impact and who can use - who can read the terrain best and use it best and the difference that that makes and the geometry of close combat, hasn't really changed a whole lot. So I would say that's really the point of departure that one has to have that in some ways you're in a business that is unchanging.

But having said that, it seems to me that there are, at least, four very large changes that are out there which will shape the future of my army and Marine Corps and yours as well. And they're changes which - some of which have happened fairly gradually so that we don't, I think, fully appreciate their impact. And I'm going to mention four. The first, it seems to me, is the pervasiveness of air power in the ground fight.

Now, again, I just did a staff ride to a place familiar to all of you, Hamel, where first time Americans and Australians fought together and on 4 July, or Independence Day no less, under a great Australian general, John Monash, and one of the things that's distinctive about Hamel is the use of air - is Monash's use of air power, not only for reconnaissance but even for resupply. It was quite innovative at the time.

But still, the amount - the change that has occurred, even since World War I, in the pervasiveness of air power, is something I think that is not always taken into account. And that is - that includes, of course, the use of little UAVs, which are now pretty much everywhere. If you want to extend it, you can extend it up to space the fact that we all assume that we can rely on space for communications, for navigation, for reconnaissance; and that, I think, is worth pausing to think about.

There are now really - there's nobody on active duty and there are precious few retirees who remember what it's like to fight a battle under conditions of inferiority, or even, parody in the air. Western armies are now completely accustomed to war in which they have - not air superiority, but air supremacy; complete, total, utter control of the air. In one of my other hats

earlier on in my career, I ran the Air Force's study of the first Gulf War and that's the first time that that really - the extent of that really hit me.

And I think if I were an official - if I was an officer in my army or yours, I would be asking myself: Is that dispensation always going to be there? And my inclination is to think the answer is no. And one of the great challenges that armies are going to have to face is operating in an environment in which they will not have air supremacy, in which you can completely deny the use of the third dimension to your opponent, and that's how I would define air supremacy. The opponent does not get to use the third dimension at all, other than, you know, to fire mortar rounds.

I think that period is gone; or it's going. And certainly if you're fighting a very developed or advanced enemy - but even, you know, Hamas was flying UAVs at the Israelis, Hezbollah has used microlights. Pretty much anybody can use space. And yes, I know you can jam GPS and so forth, but if you think about it, the ability to use space is out there for pretty much everybody.

Cruise missiles I would think of as a certain kind of air power, because they're not really a ballistic round. Those are also going to be available to pretty much everybody. So one of the great changes, it seems to me, in the nature of land warfare and land power will be going to a world which none of you are familiar with, which is an environment in which air supremacy is something you can't take for granted. When I was working as the Counselor of the State Department, I spent an awful lot of time in Iraq and Afghanistan and the thing that always struck me when we would fly over these vast logistical facilities is you could only do this if you thought - if you had complete supremacy in the air, you know? So what is it going to be like when we don't have that?

A second very large change, it seems to me, is the transformation of the technology of war itself. Now, this really again dates back to the First World War. In 1914, the basic - the weapons - if you were looking at an infantry battalion you would see an awful lot of rifles and you would see people begin to introduce maybe two machine guns per battalion. The Germans were a little bit - as usual - a little bit ahead of everybody else and they were going up to four. But that was basically - that was basically it.

By the time you get to the end of World War I, of course, there's all kinds of different hand grenades, there's heavy machine guns, there's light machine guns, there's rifle grenades, there's all kinds of new, non-lethal equipment, whether it's, you know, signalling flares, people are - on the medical front people are now introducing things like morphine and so forth.

So even by the end of World War I, there's a - there's a transformation in terms of the complexity of the equipment of small infantry kinds of units. Well, I think again, even though this has been an evolutionary process, you need to step back and say just how great the change now is. And there is just a stunning diversity of weapon systems that are out there which are employed by developed militaries, but also by outfits like Hamas and

Hezbollah and I suspect ISIS or the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps or any of the other folks that we may end up confronting on the battlefield.

We have the advent of precision. You know, when I ran the Air Force's study of the start of the First Gulf War, it was really the very - it was in some ways the beginning of routine precision applied from the air. And even then, precision munitions were quite a small minority of the munitions employed, like, about 10 or 15 per cent, and there was really no question of precision munitions in the land fight.

Well, now there are plenty of precision munitions in the land fight, and not just anti-tank missiles and stuff like that, but guided mortar projectiles and so forth. Night vision; in many ways a complete revolution in tactics. The idea that you routinely fight at night and that you have the ability to see at night and to conduct real 24-hour combat. That is - that's obviously a huge change. Precision navigation through things like GPS. The kinds of communications that now allow individual soldiers to communicate by radio and so forth.

So again you, of course, know all this much better than me. The main point, though, that I would make is again, there was a period where this gave Western militaries tremendous advantages over every opponent, and I have to think that some of those advantages are going to go away. That any - for any individual piece of equipment, the bad guys, whoever the bad guys are, they can buy it from the Russians or the Chinese.

A lot of the technologies are commercial and readily available and can be acquired and can be put together in interesting - in quite interesting ways. Again, the Middle East ends up being this kind of proving ground for a lot of these things. Just think of Hezbollah's use of webcams, for example, outside some of their tunnels to keep an eye on what the Israelis were doing. So again I think we're - you're looking at a future where some of that developed world's overwhelming technological edge is going to go away.

And I stress that because at least in my experience people like my friend H.R. McMaster are - and I think soldiers in general and particularly the closer they get to being infantrymen, the more they're like this - tend to be very sceptical about high technology. Again, because of the intimate familiarity that you all have with mud and what it does to fancy equipment. But the fact of the matter is that actually you're very reliant on high technology and an awful lot of the edge that you've brought to the battlefield is high-tech - is really high-tech stuff.

And even my friend H.R., and I've said this to him, comes on the scene in conducting this fight in the First Gulf War, The Battle of 73 Easting, he and his men were driving tanks which the Iraqis not only couldn't penetrate with their weapons, they couldn't even see them under the weather conditions that they were dealing with, and the technological overmatch was vast. And so I think the question that you might want to ask yourselves is: does - is that

technological overmatch going to persist, or is it likely to go away in some way?

A third huge change, which again has happened so gradually that we tend not to think about it, is the way in which quality has really come to dominate quantity in land warfare. You can look at - you can try to measure this just say by looking at the amount of frontage that a battalion could cover in 1914, could cover in 1918, could cover today. You can look at it simply by the number of combat soldiers actually go into a fight. You can judge it by the fact that very few developed countries are really able to sustain conscript systems that look anything like the conscript systems of the First and Second World War. And even the countries that have conscript systems, say Israel would be a good example, when you dig into it more closely, actually, the part that is doing the fighting, the actual fighting on the ground, are smaller, longer service volunteer kinds of units.

With that has come a number of other changes. We take many fewer casualties than we used to, thank goodness. There are all kinds of reasons for that, some of it has to do with the nature of the wars we have been fighting, some of it certainly has to do with medical technology. If you look at the percentage of wounded who survive, it - gone from something like one to one in World War I, to three to one in World War II and it's now, like, eight to one, or something like that, if I read the numbers correctly. And there are other reasons for it as well, including, I think, that technological overmatch that we've had.

I think, though, that one of the things that that has done is it has changed the ethos of command. And Brigadier Ryan and I have been having a running conversation on this. We were both struck - I know I was struck very forcibly in my visits to Afghanistan and Iraq by all of the American generals walking around with laminated pictures of all the soldiers who had been killed under their command in their breast pockets. Struck by the ramp ceremonies; struck by the kinds of ceremonies that countries, say like Canada, have had every time they take a casualty and that casualty comes home on the Highway of Heroes and so on.

Now, you know, in one way you can say that that means that that has changed the nature of military leadership. Your predecessors were, I think, a much more callous bunch. Even in Vietnam, the attitude towards casualties was very different than it is today. Why has this changed occurred? Well, I think we can have an interesting discussion about that. I think there are different attitudes towards the value of life. I think you're dealing with societies which don't really accept the idea of accidents anymore. The military doesn't accept the idea of accidents, and in many ways that's a good thing.

I remember when I began teaching at the Naval War College, I was - my teaching partner was a naval aviator. He said when he went in, the assumption was one out of three pilots was going to get killed and that's not because of war, that's just because of - landing on an aircraft carrier is a

really hazardous thing and you were going to break lots of airplanes and people were going to die. And we don't accept that any more.

Some of it I think has - there's part of this that's built in there is - when the numbers are so small, you really care about each individual. Some of it has to do with other kinds of changes in the style of leadership that is now acceptable and is expected. You know, if you brought George Patton back to life, he would not cut it in the United States Army today. I mean, he just would not be able to make it and that's one of the reasons why you have to be careful, I think, about the kind of hero worship of commanders from the past that one sometimes sees. A lot of them would be utterly out of place in our time.

This has a social dimension. I think it's fair to say that the relationship between land forces and their societies is now much more the relationship of champions and spectators. They're cheering on the home team, but they're champions. They're kind of viewed like football players, whether it's your kind of football or my kind of football, as sort of unique human specimens who are doing something that's very, very demanding and we're cheering for them like crazy but, you don't expect me to do that.

Now, what are the implications of all that? I think, actually, there are a lot of implications. First, I think that sensitivity to casualty, not within civil society so much as within the military itself, is a weakness; and it's a weakness that our enemies understand quite well. And I don't mean to suggest that military commanders don't do things that they ought to do, out of fear of taking casualties, but - and, again, we were having this extended conversation about this.

I think the toll that is taken on commanders is much greater because they keep a lot of the grief and so on bottled up because they always have to wear that mask of command, which has, you know, been there since the Iliad. And so the level of stress on senior commanders, I think, has probably in some ways never been higher, oddly enough. Even though casualties are several orders of magnitude less than they were in the past. So I think that's something that's really very important to understand.

There's a different set of issues that comes from the fact that there is this gap between civil society and the military. I think it's inevitable; I don't think you can - you can mitigate it in a variety of ways, but it's there. And that is going to be particularly important in the relationship between armies and their - the public servants with whom they work and the politicians with whom they work, who really in most cases will not have a direct connection with the business. And it seems to me that those consequences can be pernicious in a number of ways, to include putting the military up on a pedestal.

That's - one of the great things about having a bit of military service oneself or watching your kids go through it, is watching their illusions about human nature at least diminish somewhat, as they figure out that, yes, by and large

military people are a very admirable bunch but, guess what, there's a normal distributional curve among military people as there is among the rest of humanity. And that includes the dirtballs my daughter is trying to throw out of the United States Navy. So I think there is a number of issues there.

The third - the fourth change which is - again, it's one of these changes that at one level has been incremental but, as the Soviets use to say, at some point quantitative change becomes qualitative change - is the shift to urban warfare. From warfare - a very long period of warfare was something that was basically done in the countryside, in the woodlands, or in jungles - to built-up areas.

Now, I mean, again, there has been urban warfare as long as there has been warfare, and even some of the techniques haven't really particularly changed. You know, if you look at how the Mexican - how the United States Army fought in the Mexican War, they're doing a lot of the stuff that's in the urban warfare manuals. You know, you don't go through the doors, you break a hole in the walls, you make loopholes and all that sort of stuff. But still there's a qualitative difference, and I think the biggest qualitative difference is our enemies really will prefer to fight in cities; or many of our enemies will prefer it.

During the Gaza War, I was getting a number of questions from journalists about, well, you know, what does this mean and what's the historical parallels and so on, and so I began reading a bit about urban warfare and it's very interesting. One of the toughest urban fights for the United States Army during World War II was the - was when we took Ehingen in, I think it's October of '44. The Germans evacuated their civilian population. So there were civilian casualties, there was something like, you know - something under 1000 civilian deaths in Ehingen; but the Germans were actually trying to get their civilians out of the way.

Now, people are going to not want to get civilians out of the way, the kinds of enemies that we're going to be up against. Because, again, most of the enemies that we are up against are very aware of our political vulnerabilities to the spectacle of civilian deaths, and that's quite apart, of course, from the technical challenges of fighting in built-up areas.

So it seems to me those are four very large changes. They are, as I said, they're incremental changes which I think, when you view the world looking backwards rather than looking ahead you can say, actually, they amount to some qualitative changes which armies are going to have to deal with.

What about the future of combat itself? Well, I think the - I don't know that there's - first, everybody is guessing but, you know, I think the conventional wisdom is that hybrid warfare, if you like that phrase, is the kind of thing that we will be seeing a lot of, where you have some combination of things that look like regular militaries but that also look like guerrillas. Where you have light infantry but with some very sophisticated technology, including communications technology; the sort of things we have seen in Syria, Iraq,

Gaza, in a different way, perhaps, in the Ukraine. But that's a large part of the future, to include fighting by infantry units that are pretty skilful.

I haven't seen - I don't know if there are any studies that really just try to look at the tactical skill of some of the fighters - say the fighters of ISI. I don't even know if that's a - from an intelligence point of view, a researchable proposition, but it would be very interesting to see that. I mean, are these guys just really determined so that's - and up against a pretty feeble army, or are they actually pretty good?

And my hunch is, certainly on the basis of what I have read about the Israelis talking about Hezbollah and Hamas is, actually they're getting better. And they're getting better in part because there's Darwinian evolution; you know, we kill the stupid ones. Part of it is that they're - you know, they have state sponsors who are quite thoughtful, but in any case, I think that's an important thing to bear in mind.

I don't think, though, that we can rule out conventional conflict; certainly my country cannot. Now, that's partly because there are particular scenarios that you can imagine. You know, if the North Koreans, for whatever reason, invade the South, then we will be caught in a conventional war. But I think there are other ways in which you can still imagine certain forms of conventional warfare, particularly in the Asia Pacific, which will look a little bit more like the World War II campaigns and that will basically be because people want to either take or retain islands. Well, that's, you know, pretty obvious how that would work, and so I think you can imagine things which are essentially kinds of combat still occurring.

What kinds of wars are out there? Well, I - the way I think about this for the United States, but I think this actually applies to you as well, is - wait, actually, let me back up a little bit. When I was running the Air Force's study of the first Gulf War, I had a running battle with my - I had a number of air force officers working for me and I had a running battle with them because they always wanted to write air power as one word. I said first, that's illiterate; and secondly, you know, if air power is one word then flower power is one word, and that really got them irritated. But I was opposed to it for a number of reasons, and I hope you don't write land power as one word. It's because it makes it an abstraction whereas it's not an abstraction, it's going to be applied against concrete enemies in particular places.

And I think that the four strategic challenges, certainly that the United States has and which, in some measure, Australia may face, some that it certainly will face, are four. One is China; two is the jihadi threat, and that's probably the one that everybody feels most comfortable with now, particularly given what's in the newspapers; three is the problem of states like Iran and North Korea which are dangerous, in part because they have nuclear weapons, but not just because they have nuclear weapons and where we could imagine ourselves at war with them.

And the fourth is the challenge of ungoverned or semi-governed space where we can find ourselves going in again, despite the fact that after Iraq and Afghanistan everybody says: never again. Those, it seems to me, are all quite concrete kinds of challenges.

The challenge, even for the United States, with all of our resources and the size of our military is we cannot cover all of those bets. And that, too, is a problem that you face in a different way and that leads me to one proposition which I've put to American military leaders and I would put to you.

One of the other things that has gone away - we think about the future by looking back - is the idea of mobilisation. The United States stopped thinking about mobilisation in a serious way in the 1950s and yet, you still have officers in the Pentagon that are in charge of being able to double the production of JDAMs if that's what's called for. But real mobilisation of the kind that, for example, took a tiny army here and generated a force of 400,000 soldiers out of a population of five million was a spectacular mobilisation and that put five very good divisions on the Western Front; we don't think about that any more.

Now, I don't mean to suggest that we're going to go back to the kinds of things that we did during the World Wars. But I do think militaries have gone out of the business of thinking about what will we do if the world really goes to hell in some way that we can't fully predict and we really need to seriously expand the kind of force that we can project? That's not just the land power problem; this is obviously across the board. And I think if I could urge you to do anything it would be to think in a serious way about the mobilisation of power in case things go badly in some way.

Let me conclude by just saying two things. In terms of what are the dangers, in terms of thinking about the future of land power in particular, but of all military force in general, I will begin by telling you that I rejected the initial title of the talks that I was asked to give, because they all had something about land power and regional diplomacy and strategic engagement and stuff like that.

The reason why I rejected it is because it seems to me that now more than ever it's critical to remember that the fundamental function of all our enforcers, but particularly of land forces, is to smash things and kill people. And even if you're in the business of preventing other people from smashing things and killing people, the way you're going to do that is by smashing things and killing people.

I think we're also in danger of forgetting that, in its essence, war is still very much a contest of wills in a very elemental way. It's a hard thing for a Professor of Strategic Studies to admit but, you know, one of the lessons I think I've learned, both by government service and reading a lot of history is: as important as it is to be clever, raw determination and willingness to persevere counts for an enormous - an enormous amount.

The temptation in peace time and your armies resetting from your wars - we're resetting from our wars- is to get away from that reality, but I think it's still very much out there. To include the business about breaking the will of the other side which was a staple of military thought for a very long time that has kind of dropped out of it.

Even look at the way my country talks about the use of force now in Iraq. It's as if they're dealing with a scalpel and it's not a scalpel; it's a sabre. Or, I mean, you better use it as a sabre rather than trying to take it and just sort of, you know, dab at somebody with the point. And it's a particularly important thing for both our societies and our political leaders to understand and I've always thought there's a great educational function that military officers have in explaining the nature of war to their civilian superiors who have, undoubtedly, thought almost not at all about that.

The second thing I would say is, and I've always been very struck by this great line from Clausewitz, that in the absence of a true theory of war, routine methods take over, even at the highest level. So there you have Clausewitz, not as a theorist of war, but as somebody who profoundly understood bureaucratic behaviour. That, unless you really have a very conscious picture of what war is and how you intend to fight it and how the different things that you do, as he said, lead to a soldier fighting at the right place and at the right time, you will fall back on routine methods, on all kinds of other things. Whether it's financial accountability, or diversity, or any of a number of other perfectly worthy and understandable things - or safety - that are other than what you were ultimately about; which is fighting the wars that you're going to wage and I think the wars that we're going to wage, hopefully, alongside you.

So on that cheerful note, let me conclude my remarks, and I believe we will take a break.

COMPERE:
Ladies and gentlemen, we will now take a roughly 25 minute break for afternoon tea just outside and then we will reconvene for discussion.